

Dublin girl missing without trace

Fearful parents sure daughter isn't runaway

By David Boitano

Staff writer

FEB 1 1989

DUBLIN — Search parties combed the city by land and air Tuesday, looking for a 13-year-old Dublin girl who vanished while walking home from school on Monday. *Kidnap*

Late Tuesday night, authorities still had no clues to the whereabouts of Ilené Misheloff and were using dogs to sniff along Amador Valley Boulevard — where she was last seen.

Meanwhile, her family and friends feared the worst.

"I don't even want to think about it," said her father, fighting back tears. "I know she wouldn't run away so I know it must be bad."

The girl's regular habits and lack of problems at home or school suggest that she would not run away, said Jim Rose, chief of Dublin Police Services. On the other hand, he noted, there were no indications of foul play.

Anyone with information about her whereabouts should call the Dublin Police at 829-0566.

Misheloff was last seen walking west on Amador Valley Boulevard around 3 p.m. She was enroute from Wells Intermediate School to her home on Alegre Drive where was to meet her ice skating coach.

An award-winning skater, she was supposed to practice later at the Dublin Iceland skating rink on San Ramon Road. Her mother Madelyne reported her missing at 6 p.m.

On her normal route home from school, Misheloff would walk along Amador Valley Boulevard to San Ramon Road and through a ditch that runs near Mape Park.

The ditch often is used by students walking home from school, deputies said.

More than 32 investigators from See Missing, back of section



Neil Hanshaw — staff photo

Family friend Sue Berg, left, tries to comfort Madelyne Misheloff, as the mother hugs her oldest son, Robert, 15. Brian Misheloff, the missing girl's twin brother, is at far right.



Jay Solmonson — staff photo

Michael Misheloff holds picture of his missing daughter, Ilene, 13.

Missing —

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the Dublin police, Alameda County Sheriff's Department and the Alameda County Office of Emergency Services searched the city's honey-comb system of drainage ditches.

The all-volunteer Alameda County Sheriff's Posse rode through the rugged Martin Canyon area west of Misheloff's home on horseback but were unable to find anything.

A helicopter from the East Bay Regional Park District searched over the entire city.

The Misheloffs, with help from friends, searched their neighborhood area late Monday night.

"I searched in the creek behind the house," Michael Misheloff said. "I just kept it up until the batteries in the flashlight were completely discharged. It was just frantic afterwards and it's been a long frightening night."

Other friends helped put up posters of the missing girl, and volunteers from the Kevin Collins Foundation, which helps search for missing kids, have printed up 30,000 flyers which they will start handing out today at the ice rink, said David Collins, father of the boy whose disappearance in 1984 sparked forma-



Family portrait of missing girl, Ilene Misheloff.

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Officials said they have no evidence linking Misheloff's disappearance to that of 10-year-old Michaela Garecht, but Garecht's mother Sharon was at the house Tuesday night to lend the family some support.

Also there was the father of Amber Swartz-Garcia, who vanished from her Pinole home last June.

"We're here to deal with all the merciless practicalities — the telephones, the 800 (telephone) lines, bank accounts, reward funds," said Al Garcia.

Telephone company workers installed a second line into the Misheloff home at Garcia's suggestion.

"We're setting up an additional residential line to allow the home line to be free just in case Ilene wants to call," Garcia said.

Representatives from the Missing Children's Project of California gathered family members and friends in the living room to discuss the distribution of flyers.

The publicity is vitally important, said Garcia. Many Dublin businesses had already posted the fliers in their windows, and reporters, photographers and television crews arrived throughout the day.

"This kind of thing has to be publicized," said Judy Lockhurst, whose daughter skates with Ilene. "If we don't pull together as a community, our kids are not going to be safe."

Friends and neighbors began arriving at the house in the morning, some bringing casseroles or offering to cook dinner. Ilene's parents said they got little sleep Monday night and could not eat anything.

Family portrait of missing girl, Ilene Misheloff.

Walls in the living room and dining room were filled with photographs of an athletic and graceful Ilene, posing in her skating costumes.

A photo above the fireplace showed her in a white lace dress next to her twin brother, Brian, taken last May when they celebrated their bar and bat mitzvah, the Jewish coming-of-age ritual.

Brian and 15-year-old brother Robert were taking their sister's disappearance "real hard," Madelyne Misheloff said. "They haven't said anything."

Rabbi Ira Book, who has known Ilene for eight years, said there was nothing he could say that would comfort the Misheloffs.

"You're dealing with the ultimate nightmare for a parent, that a child has been taken," he said. "I don't think there are any magic words that are going to make it any easier. It's a terrible trauma and we just hope to get her back."

At Ilene's school, teachers, administrators and police cars patrolled Tuesday afternoon, watching for odd occurrences.

Her disappearance has baffled and frightened classmates, skating companions and other friends who described her Tuesday as a high achiever, quiet and sweet.

"She's one of those 'good' kids — an achiever, a believer, she's happy," said Wells counselor Marcia Bennett, who met with Misheloff occasionally to discuss minor school problems.

Reaction among students at Wells Middle School ranged from disbelief to fear.

"Everybody's scared to walk home," said seventh-grader Andrea Savaglio.

Staff writers Stacey Hartmann and Tracy Pope contributed to this report.

Teen one of many missing

Ilene Misheloff is not the first child to vanish without a trace.

Other missing children or those who were missing from the Bay Area include:

- Kevin Collins, 11, who vanished from a street in San Francisco Feb. 10, 1984. He has never been found, though the FBI recently released a computer-enhanced photo of what he may look like today. The Kevin Collins Foundation, which aids in search for missing children, was established in his memory.

- Amber Swartz-Garcia, 7, who vanished from in front of her Pi-

nole home on June 3, 1988. No trace of the hearing-impaired child has been found.

- Candi Elizabeth Talarico, 4, who was abducted in Sacramento on June 4, 1988. She was found five weeks later in the basement of a church where she had been held by a deaf former church janitor.

- Michaela Joy Garecht, 10, who was abducted by a man with shoulder length blond hair and acne on his face at the Rainbow Market on Mission Boulevard in Hayward on Nov. 19. Despite an extensive search, she has not been found.

for missing *Missing Person* girl's return

By David Boitano
Staff writer

FEB 2 1989

Kidnap

DUBLIN — The mother of missing 13-year-old Ilene Misheloff made an emotional plea Wednesday for the safe return of her daughter, as thousands of fliers bearing the girl's likeness were printed and distributed throughout Dublin and the East Bay.

"Whoever has her, we want her back," said Madelyne Misheloff, sitting next to her husband, Michael. "We

□ FBI agents get frustrated over lack of clues.

□ SF police find girl who looks like Amber Swartz-Garcia — but is not.

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have no interest in you, but our daughter means everything to us."

Police, meanwhile, remained baffled about how and why the Dublin teen-ager vanished on her way home from Wells Intermediate School Monday afternoon. She was last seen walking along Amador Valley Boulevard near the Shamrock Plaza Shopping Center around 3 p.m. Monday.

Dublin Police Chief Jim Rose said Ilene's disappearance could be a kidnapping, but there still were no clues
See Missing, back of section

Tim Hunt



Aren't suburbs safe for kids?

"Our children can't go to school without being shot at with an AK-47 and they can't walk home from school without being kidnapped. They can't even play jump rope in front of the house. They are not safe anywhere."

— Al Garcia, father of missing Amber Swartz-Garcia of Pinole.

FEB 2 1989

UGLY REALITY REACHED into our comfortable East Bay living rooms this week and grabbed us.

Today, the grim reality that 13-year-old Ilene Misheloff vanished from a Dublin street continues to shake us. It forces us to question basic assumptions that make living in these seemingly safe suburban enclaves so comfortable.

Our communities are safe. Check the crime rates.

But low crime rates mean nothing to Michael and Madelyne Misheloff, when they can only wonder where Ilene is and whether she is safe.

In the suburbs, we blissfully think we've insulated ourselves from the drug wars of Oakland and the gangs that plague other East Bay cities.

But this week we were jarred when we discovered that senseless crime isn't limited to the places where disappearances are so routine that they warrant only a couple of paragraphs in the back of the local newspaper, if that.

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Cut this poster out of the newspaper and use it however you think it would be best. Take it with you in your car, attach it to your refrigerator so your own children will know what to watch for, or hang it somewhere where others will see it.

Ilene Misheloff

- ☐ **Date of birth:** March 12, 1975
- ☐ **Age:** 13
- ☐ **Hair:** Brown, shoulder length
- ☐ **Eyes:** Brown
- ☐ **Height:** 5' 3"
- ☐ **Weight:** 115 pounds

Ilene was last seen in the area of Amador Valley Boulevard and Village Parkway in Dublin at about 2:30 p.m. Monday. She had just left Wells Intermediate School and was en route to her home on Alegre Drive.

After stopping at home she was to attend ice skating practice at the Dublin Iceland Arena.

When last seen, Ilene was wearing glasses, a charcoal-gray pullover sweater, a gray and pink skirt with horizontal stripes and black sneakers. She has braces on her teeth.



Reward fund

A reward fund has been established at Community First National Bank, 749 Main St. in Pleasanton, 846-2891. Donations may be made at any branch. The fund was established with a \$1,000 donation from John M. Grubb Co. Realtors in San Ramon.

An Ilene Misheloff Search Fund has been established at the Bank of America branch in San Ramon at 9451 Village Parkway. This money is used to pay operating costs for the search.

If you have any information on her whereabouts call:

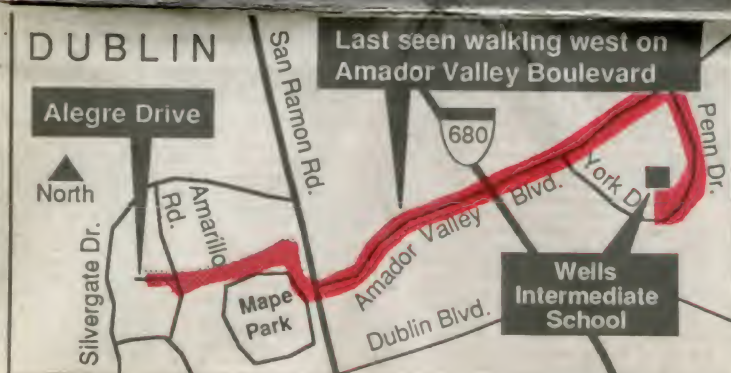
Dublin Police

1-800-635-6306 or 415-829-0566

FBI

415-553-7400

Ilene's route home from school



two days with reporters' cars and vans.

The parents said they got little sleep Tuesday night.

said eighth-grader Darcie Nessinger, who

Police must count on public for clues

By Dennis J. Oliver
Staff writer

FEB 2 1989

The crime scene can be a sidewalk where one minute a child is playing jump rope and the next minute she is gone. Or it can be the street from which a child disappears one day on her way to school.

When police are called on to find the missing child, they usually find no fingerprints, no suspect description, and in many cases no evidence that a crime has even taken place. Sometimes, years go by before the case is solved. Sometimes it never is.

"It's difficult and it's very frustrating," said David Knowlton, an FBI agent who for the past eight months has been involved in the search for 7-year-old Amber Swartz-Garcia, who vanished from in front of her Pinole home last June.

Wednesday, the FBI — considered the country's most experienced law enforcement agency when it comes to kidnap investigations — joined the search for Ilene Misheloff of Dublin, the third young girl in eight months to vanish in the East Bay.

As with Amber, 13-year-old Ilene is gone without a clue. Unlike those two cases however, witnesses saw the man who kidnapped a third girl, 10-year-old Michaela Garecht of Hayward, in November, but she too has not been found.

The difficulty, police say, is that in all three cases they are banking on help from the public to find the missing girls, which puts them at the mercy of the media and public information campaigns.

And even when the word is out, that doesn't necessarily mean it's getting to the right people.

"I don't think anyone working on this kind of a case can tell you when a child has been kidnapped and has

been missing for nine months that they don't think the child will be found the next day," said Knowlton.

In all three cases, the FBI has merely provided manpower to local police and the investigation has remained under the charge of local authorities. If a ransom demand were made in one of the cases, however, the FBI would take charge.

Customary practice when a child turns up missing is for investigators to begin by doing a background check on the missing child and the child's family and friends. Beyond that, searching and guessing and prioritizing tips is all that a police department can do.

In the cases of Amber and Michaela, new tips continue to come in on a daily basis. Police in both Pinole and Hayward have spoken with Dublin authorities about Ilene Michelhoff's disappearance but have not found any evidence that they are connected.

"All we can say for sure right now is that we have a missing little girl and so do they," said Hayward Police Lt. Charles Breazeale. "Until they get more information, we won't know for sure if there is a connection."

Dublin police, meanwhile, have little information.

"All we can do is look at where the person was last seen and where the person was supposed to go and then work between those two parameters," said Dublin Police Chief Jim Rose.

Rose said investigators had received hundreds of calls about Ilene, most of them from people who either saw the Wells Intermediate School student walking down Amador Valley Boulevard on her way home from classes or who saw her at the school Monday afternoon. The police search for her has not gone beyond the city of Dublin, he said Wednesday.



Neil Hanshaw — staff photo

Michael and Madelyne Misheloff on the third day of their daughter, Ilene's, disappearance.

Missing

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to her disappearance. It is still being considered a missing person's case, he said.

But her parents insisted that Ilene is too responsible to run away and they believe someone has their daughter.

"That person can disappear into the woodwork," Madelyne Misheloff said. "Just as long as he doesn't bother her and lets her come home. We love her and we want her home."

Police have received hundreds of phone calls and leads but have yet to get the solid clue that would lead them to Ilene, Rose said.

Police and Alameda County sheriff's deputies conducted door-to-door canvassing along Amador Valley Boulevard on Wednesday to question anyone who may have seen Ilene before she vanished.

A helicopter from the East Bay Regional Park District equipped with special infrared monitoring devices and manned by a Dublin police officer was flown over the city as part of the search.

The infrared device can detect heat given off by a

phone calls, answering a reporter's questions, or updating the log of telephone calls.

By 3 p.m., 35 people had phoned, some calling on a new line installed to help keep the regular line free in case Ilene tried to call.

Their oldest child, Robert, 15, silently leafed through the log's pages when he got home from school.

"It's really shaken them up," Michael Misheloff said of his two sons. "They'll try not to let it out, try to make it appear like it's not affecting them, but it is."

"We try to keep positive thoughts. I try to tell myself that she's coming back today. If tomorrow comes and she's still not here, I'll tell myself she's coming back tomorrow. And if the next day comes and she's still not here, I'll tell myself she's coming back the next day."

"I'll do that every day until she comes back."

The lobby of Dublin Iceland, where Ilene trained for ice skating competitions, served as the nerve center for volunteers who passed out leaflets throughout the Livermore and San Ramon valleys and the East Bay.

Volunteers estimated that more than 50,000 leaflets

Monday afternoon.
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A helicopter from the East Bay Regional Park District equipped with special infrared monitoring devices and manned by a Dublin police officer was flown over the city as part of the search.

The infrared device can detect heat given off by a body or other items that may have been missed during the initial search Tuesday.

"Basically, we don't have anything different than we had yesterday," Rose said.

Authorities have no evidence linking the Misheloff disappearance to that of 10-year-old Michaela Garecht of Hayward, who was abducted in November, but they have been in contact with Hayward police and other Bay Area agencies seeking missing children, Rose said.

On the third day of agony for the Misheloff household, family members and friends gathered around the big kitchen table. All had yellow ribbons pinned on their shirts or sweaters to signify their hope for Ilene's quick return.

Sharon Garecht, mother of Michaela, brought the spool of yellow ribbon, Madelyne Misheloff said.

Ilene's twin, Brian, and older brother, Robert, went to school Wednesday. By late afternoon, friends had tied yellow ribbons around trees and light poles on Amador Valley Boulevard, the last area where Ilene was seen. Ribbons also went up on the Misheloffs' street, a cul-de-sac that has been jammed in the past two days with reporters' cars and vans.

The parents said they got little sleep Tuesday night. "My mind is a little more clear than it was yesterday," said Michael Misheloff. "I don't feel any better but my mind is working better."

He seemed to be most composed when he was occupied with the business of finding his daughter — taking

The lobby of Dublin Iceland, where Ilene trained for ice skating competitions, served as the nerve center for volunteers who passed out leaflets throughout the Livermore and San Ramon valleys and the East Bay.

Volunteers estimated that more than 50,000 leaflets containing Ilene's photo and description were reproduced by Dublin police, volunteer printers in Dublin and Pleasanton and the Kevin Collins Foundation of San Francisco.

Approximately 100 people signed up to help, and an undetermined number came to the rink to pick up leaflets. The volunteers are distributing the leaflets throughout the East Bay and Tracy.

Some volunteers, like Kathy Moreno of Dublin, brought their children with them.

Moreno and her family moved to Dublin from San Francisco in hopes of finding a more peaceful community.

"It (kidnapping) is the universal fear of parents," she said.

Many parents insisted on picking up their youngsters from school Wednesday, afraid to let them travel their usual paths home on foot or bicycle.

At Wells Intermediate School, where Ilene was an eighth-grader, there were about one-third more cars lined up waiting to chauffeur students home.

"I'd be looking over my shoulder if I was by myself," said eighth-grader Darcie Nessinger, who was headed home with Johnson and two other friends.

"We feel fine as long as we're with each other," eighth-grader Michelle Johnson said.

Johnson said she arrived home five minutes late on Tuesday and her worried parents already had called some of her friends.

Tragedy

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ILENE HITS HARD because she vanished from our back yard, but our children have been under siege everywhere.

Michaela Garecht was abducted from a Hayward parking lot last November. The outpouring of community concern, money and volunteer time demonstrated how deeply Michaela's kidnapping touched us.

Both Amber Swartz-Garcia of Pinole and Candi Talarico of Sacramento vanished last June. Candi was found five weeks later, but Amber is still missing.

And, last month a deranged gunman sprayed a Stockton schoolyard with bullets, killing five Asian children and wounding 29.

THE IMMEDIATE HORROR of the Stockton scene has faded, but its effect lingers, haunting us.

Ilene's disappearance adds to the tragic puzzle. Looking at our families, we ask the fundamental question: Are they safe?

Can my daughter or son walk to school? Is the playground around the corner OK?

Safety is an unfamiliar issue for many of us. Based on our own experiences, we had assumed that our schools are safe and that our children can walk through our towns.

Ilene's disappearance shattered those assumptions.

WE DON'T KNOW what happened to Ilene, but the mystery touches all of us, right where we live, as families, as human beings.

Parents showed their concern Tuesday, picking up their children at Wells Intermediate on a warm, sunny day as if rain were pelting down. They didn't want their kids to walk home.

Monday, they wouldn't have thought of making that trip.

What's our society coming to?

Michaela Garecht did all of the things we should teach our children to do about safety in numbers and she still was abducted.

Ilene may have violated those rules by taking the

shortcut through a dry creek and walking alone, but she's 13 and who thinks she needs to worry about such things in Dublin?

And we don't know if that shortcut through a piece of nature amid the suburban sprawl had anything to do with it. She could have been picked up off the sidewalk.

This isn't street wars country. It's a peaceful, suburban community — the type of place many people want to move to because they view it as a good place to raise a family.

WE'RE SEARCHING FOR answers to these basic questions — questions we thought we'd answered when we moved into the suburbs.

We need to help each other by discussing these issues.

Our mobile society that includes many households with both parents working and many more single-parent families has broken down the support system that characterized our smaller communities 20 years ago.

Rebuilding and strengthening those neighborhood ties so we can watch out for each other would help us feel safer, but it wouldn't remove the wrenching question that Ilene's disappearance raised.

The thought that our streets are unsafe for a 13-year-old girl terrifies us.

THERE'S NO COMFORTING answer to that question other than Ilene's safe return.

Still, we should remember that as wrenching as the disappearances and the Stockton tragedy are, they remain isolated incidents.

They serve as reminders that although our communities are fundamentally safe, we must take sensible precautions.

Teach your children that there's safety in numbers, to walk on well-traveled streets and to play away from curbs. And never leave your child alone in a car.

Pray for the safe return of Ilene, Michaela, Amber and other missing children. And give what you can — time or money — to help bring them home.

Days, nights getting longer for the Misheloff family

By Stacey Hartmann
Staff writer

FEB 3 1989

DUBLIN — Michael Misheloff ventured away from home Thursday for the first time since his daughter disappeared.

The trip to the bank would have been a routine errand for anyone else but it was an emotional ordeal for the father of missing 13-year-old Ilene Misheloff.

"I saw yellow ribbons everywhere and Ilene's picture in just about every store

☐ A plea to return the children
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that we saw," he said. "It was very painful to see her pictures all over the place but it's a measure of the community's support that I'll never forget."

Except for his drive to the bank, Misheloff and his wife, Madelyne, have spent the last four days and nights in their Alegre Drive home.

Both work. He's with a San Jose semi-

conductor company and she's employed by a Pleasanton firm that sells physical therapy and exercise equipment.

Neither has thought about when they will return to their jobs. Ilene's disappearance has turned their lives upside down and their only focus is getting Ilene back.

"It's the same as yesterday," Madelyne Misheloff said Thursday. "Just waiting and hoping."

The parents are hoping that two groups of youths spotted near where

their daughter was last seen Monday can throw some light on her mysterious disappearance.

One group of three or four youths was playing ball in May Park near a creekbed where Misheloff often walked through on her way home, officials said.

The other group consisted of youths riding bicycles on dirt mounds near a condominium construction site along Amador Valley Road, near the Misheloff home on Alegre Drive.

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Missing

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Police do not know if the youths saw Misheloff, Dublin Police Chief Jim Rose said. He had no information about their physical descriptions.

It helps to stay busy, the father says. Dealing with reporters, talking on the phone and greeting friends occupies most of their time.

The tile counter dividing the kitchen from the family room has become the nerve center for the family's efforts.

Two telephones and stacks of fliers with Ilene's pictures and description are on the counter. Next to the phones are a log showing all the people who have called and the addresses of the banks handling the search and reward funds.

The household has been somewhat chaotic. Friends, neighbors and strangers drop by every few minutes to offer food and kind words.

"A man I've never seen before came from a youth group and he brought a pizza," Misheloff said. "The response from the community has been overwhelming."

The parents of other missing children have given their support to the Misheloffs. Kim and Al Garcia of Pinole, whose daughter Amber has been missing since June, and Sharon Garecht of Hayward, whose daughter Michaela was abducted in November, came to the house Tuesday night.

Investigators in Hayward and Pinole are keeping the lines of communication open with Dublin detectives in hope that the East Bay's third apparent kidnapping in eight months might breathe new life into those cases.

Amber Swartz-Garcia, 8, vanished from her Pinole home June 4. Michaela Garecht, 10, was seen kidnapped by a man who forced her into his car at a Hayward grocery store.

FBI officials, who are helping with all three cases, said Thursday that they are operating under the assumption that Ilene was kidnapped but stressed that they have no solid proof that her disappearance is a kidnapping.

"We have nothing to indicate that she ran away, was kidnapped or just turned into a spirit," said FBI spokesman Chuck Latting.

A task force of 25 to 30 investigators from the FBI, Dublin Police and the Alameda County Sheriff's Department continued the painstaking task of running down the hundreds of leads being phoned in by citizens.

Calls to the police department's phones have averaged about 200 a day not counting the calls being received on the toll free line, authorities said.

"Every breath you take, you hope

An open letter

Editor's note: This plea arrived at Alameda Newspapers offices Thursday. Normally we would not print an unsigned letter, but this writer represents the views of all of us who would like to see the children safely returned:

This letter is an appeal to all those people who have, who are, or who will harm the most important segment of our society — our children.

There is no crime great enough that deserves the punishment our children are receiving today from unknown, and sometimes known, assailants. The people participating in these crimes are attacking the one part in each of us that believes unquestioningly in goodness, trust and love. How

sad — for no other part is so sadly needed in today's society. What a tragic loss of innocence. The very values that can save us are being destroyed by those who refuse to seek the help they so desperately need. What they lack, and so badly need, they are stealing from our next generation.

To those who might have taken or harmed such children as Kevin Collins, Michaela Garecht and Ilene Misheloff, we say as a people — it is time to send the children home. Senseless crimes against innocent children cannot be tolerated from those of us who believe in the sacredness of childhood.

Hear us as one voice when we say: "It has been enough. . ."

and pray that when the phone rings it's going to be your child saying, 'I'm OK,'" Kim Garcia said.

Nightfall triggers other terrifying images, she said.

"When night comes, when it's raining, you're wondering, 'Where's my child? Is she lying in a field somewhere, unable to move? Are they being rained on?'" Mrs. Garcia said.

Michael Misheloff said he tries to avoid such thoughts. He plans to take one day at a time and tell himself each day that his daughter will be coming home soon.

"Each day seems like forever," he said. "Having people here is a big help. When we're alone — and we have been occasionally — that's the worst time."

A new computer has provided some diversion for Ilene's twin, Brian, and older brother, Robert, 15. While Robert has been able to attend classes, the pressure seems too much for Brian, who came home early from school Wednesday and did not attend at all on Thursday.

The torment of having a missing child may be especially great for the Misheloffs since most of their activities have been centered around the children: taking them to their skating lessons, little league practices and sleep-overs at friends' houses.

"Right now we're in the taxi-driving stage," he said. "Our time is devoted to the children. What else is there?"

To help keep word of the case in the public eye, information campaigns involving fliers with Ilene's photograph on them have been launched, according to representatives of three missing children's organizations.

The largest, being managed in Dublin by the Kevin Collins Foundation, had seen about 70,000 of the fliers distributed throughout the Livermore Valley by Thursday



Staff photo — Jay Solmonson

A telephone pole in Dublin pleads for information on Ilene — as well as still-missing Michaela Garecht of Hayward.

night, said foundation spokesman Mike Deasy.

In Hayward, the Missing Children's Project of California has printed 10,000 fliers of Ilene and is distributing them from the home of Michaela Garecht's parents, said director Patricia Chavez.

In Pinole, the Amber Swartz-Garcia Foundation also has launched a flier distribution campaign and has planned a national mailing of fliers showing all three missing girls next Wednesday, said Al Garcia, Amber's father.

Wednesday, said Al Garcia,
Amber's father.

Those who wish to help with the
Dublin information campaign may
come to the office at 7475 Starward
Drive, or call 829-3810 or 829-3811.

Volunteers in the Hayward area
can help by contacting the Missing
Children's Project, 483-3576, or the
Garecht home, 487-7026.

Missing teen's twin appeals to classmates

By David Boitano

Staff writer

FEB 4 1989

DUBLIN — The lunchroom at Wells Intermediate School fell silent Friday when the twin brother of a missing Dublin girl stood up to speak.

Kidnap
Brian Misheloff, 13, reminded his schoolmates of how his sister Ilene had disappeared while walking home from school on Monday — and told them that their help was needed to find her.

Give to the search and reward funds, he pleaded. They responded by filling a small bucket with coins and dollar bills.

"The kids have been incredibly supportive and well-wishing," said Linda Pearson, Wells Middle School principal. "The kids are not afraid to talk to him and tell him they're thinking about him, something that's hard for adults to do."

Meanwhile, as police and the FBI continued coming up empty-handed in their search for the girl, Lucky Stores, Inc. of Dublin announced on Friday that it would donate 100,000 fliers of the missing girl and place them in its 154 California stores.

A similar boost was announced in the search for another missing girl, Michaela Joy Garecht, 10, of Hayward, who was abducted Nov. 19.

Some 120,000 slick fliers bearing a new color picture of Michaela Joy Garecht and a more lifelike color

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Kidnap

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rendering of her kidnapper were printed on Friday.

"It's very important to get out more than one pose or view of the child," said Patricia Chavez of the Missing Children's Project, who has organized volunteer efforts from a command post at the Garecht's Hayward home since the 10-year-old girl was kidnapped Nov. 19. Chavez said a child may look very different when seen from different angles or dressed in other types of clothes.

The new color picture of Michaela, known as "Kayla," was found by her mother, Sharon Garecht, when she was searching through family photos. The photograph was taken last summer, shortly before the school picture which adorns the most recent black-and-white posters distributed by volunteers.

The image of the kidnapping suspect is taken from a color painting, the work of a police detective's wife who was fascinated by the case.

The Missing Children's Project is

hoping to arrange a community gathering for Saturday, Feb. 11 to distribute the fliers, along with posters of Ilene Misheloff and Amber Swartz-Garcia, an 8-year-old Pinole girl who disappeared last June.

Volunteers are needed both to post fliers in public places and to mail them to a list of law enforcement agencies, gas stations, auto-body and paint shops, and other places throughout the state. Stamps or donations to cover the cost of printing and mailing would also be helpful, said Chavez.

While the new fliers are good news for the search efforts, authorities on Friday had no solid clues to report in either case.

Ilene disappeared Monday afternoon while walking home from Wells Intermediate School. Her disappearance is being treated as a kidnapping by the FBI, although authorities have not officially concluded that she was abducted.

More than 80,000 fliers bearing Ilene's photos already have been distributed throughout the East



Michaela Garecht

Bay, and volunteers will take to the streets again today to hand out thousands more.

Friday's rain may have deterred some of the hundreds of volunteers who have been posting the leaflets on utility poles.

More workers are needed to get leaflets out, especially in some areas of Pleasanton and Danville, volunteer coordinators said.

Workers should report to the vol-



Ilene Misheloff

unteer headquarters today at 7475 Starward Drive.

Anyone with information about the Garecht kidnapping should call police at 800-222-3999. To provide information about the Misheloff case, call 829-0566 or 1-800-635-6306.

Staff writers Tracy Pope, Marilee Strong and Lisa Bowen contributed to this report.



Carol Padovan — staff photo

Ilene's parents embrace next to the decorated oak tree.

Girl's disappearance makes city cautious

By David Boitano
Staff writer

FEB 5 1989

DUBLIN — Her friends used to joke about Joyce Waite's habit of driving her children to school every day, even though her family lives not far from the neighborhood elementary school.

The jokes stopped on Monday afternoon.

"I have gotten lots of calls from them asking, 'Can you drive

my children, too?'" she said.

Parents are keeping a close eye on their children since 13-year-old Ilene Misheloff of Dublin turned up missing.

The girl, a middle school student who lived to ice skate, vanished seemingly into thin air around 3 p.m. Monday while walking home from school along busy Amador Valley Boulevard.

See Girl, page 7

Continued from page 1

Her disappearance has sent shock waves through this middle-class community and added Dublin to the list of Bay Area cities with missing children.

Within hours of Ilene's disappearance, the families of 10-year-old Michaela Garecht of Hayward and Amber Swartz-Garcia of Pinole came to the Misheloff home on Alegre Drive to offer their sympathy and advice.

Authorities say they have no evidence directly linking the cases, but the Misheloff case is familiar to anyone who has followed the stories of missing children.

Five days after Ilene's disappearance, police remained baffled Saturday over how or why a girl could suddenly vanish without a trace.

Unlike the Garecht kidnapping, police have no description of abductor or vehicle to aid in their search, and can't even be certain if she was kidnapped. The FBI has classified the case as a possible kidnapping.

And as with Michaela and Amber, hundreds of volunteers have stepped forward to print and distribute thousands of fliers to ensure that Ilene Misheloff's name and face stay in the public's mind.

Supporters tied giant yellow ribbons and 100 yellow balloons around the Old Oak Tree in Danville Saturday. The family is asking that motorists tie yellow ribbons to their car antennas and keep their auto lights on during the weekend to keep Ilene's memory alive.

Nearly 100,000 fliers bearing Ilene's photo have been circulated from a donated office in Dublin and other locations including Hayward and Pinole, where the two other missing girls lived.

Despite the lack of encouraging news, volunteers are not about to give up.

"It has hit hard and it has got to stop," said 20-year-old Lee Ann Mincer, of Dublin, who walked five miles in the rain last week to help distribute fliers of Ilene. "There is no reason that this had to happen."

Searchers believe one key to finding the missing girls is keeping their photographs in the public eye so that authorities receive a steady stream of tips that might lead to their whereabouts.

In Hayward, the Missing Children's Project of California has printed 10,000 of the fliers of Ilene and has begun distributing them from the home of Michaela Garecht's parents, said director Patricia Chavez.

In Dublin, the Amber Swartz-Gar-

tricia Chavez.

In Pinole, the Amber Swartz-Garcia Foundation also has launched a flier distribution campaign and has planned a national mailing of fliers showing all three missing girls next Wednesday, said Al Garcia, Amber's father.

Those who wish to help can come to the office or call 829-3810 or 829-3811.

Volunteers in the Hayward area can help by contacting the Missing Children's Project, 483-3576, or the Garecht home, 487-7026. In Pinole, volunteers can help by contacting the Amber Swartz-Garcia Foundation at 800-541-0777.

Callers in Hayward and Pinole will be instructed where to go to pick up fliers of Ilene and/or Michaela and Amber.

Like other parents throughout the Bay Area, Mike and Madelyne Misheloff watched the news of the Amber and Michaela disappearances but didn't realize what it is like to have a missing child until their daughter vanished.

"I thought, 'My God, what a thing to happen' It never struck a personal fear," he said.

Staff writer Dennis Oliver contributed to this report.

Mervyn's gives \$1,000 to keep search for Ilene going strong

By Sandra Bodovitz
Staff writer

550 2 1 1989

DUBLIN — Mervyn's Department Store in Dublin donated \$1,000 to the Misheloff family to help in the search for their missing daughter, Ilene.

"We've been in the Dublin community for a long time and we want to help keep the momentum going for a safe return for Ilene Misheloff," said Judy Belk, a store merchandiser at Mervyn's.

The contribution will be used for operating expenses associated with trying to locate the 13-year-old girl, who disappeared Jan. 30 on her way home from school.

The major expense is the cost of stamps for mailing fliers, said Mi-

chael Misheloff, Ilene's father. Other expenses include telephone and utility costs, he said.

So far the paper for fliers, bearing her photo and description, has been donated and reportedly over a million have been distributed. But there are no new developments in the case, Misheloff said.

The Mervyn's donation, which Misheloff said he greatly appreciates, was made at 9:30 a.m. Monday.

"Many of our employees have been wearing yellow ribbons," said Belk. "We're a family department store. Our typical customer is a woman with young children and many of our employees have small children."

A volunteer in the search for Ilene had asked Mervyn's to donate yellow ribbon, said store manager Mike Murray.

"We were out of ribbon, but we wanted to help in some way so we made the monetary donation," he said.

The donation was made by the Dublin store on behalf of the Mervyn's corporation, which has an active community giving program, Belk said.

The store also has made contributions to the Michaela Garecht Fund in Hayward and recently gave \$5,000 to assist families involved in the Stockton schoolyard shootings.

Crimes: Solace, solutions

150 comfort Misheloffs at church service

By Laird Harrison
Staff writer

FEB 7 1989
DUBLIN — "She's coming back," Mike Misheloff said softly in the ear of a friend.

The friend moved on, and another in a long line of friends came forward to wrap her arms around him and whisper words of hope and condolence.

Misheloff smiled, though his eyes were watering. And he seemed as much to reassure as to be reassured by those who gathered around his family at St. Raymond's Catholic Church Monday night, that his missing 13-year-old daughter Ilene will one day return.

Some 150 people came to join Mike Misheloff, his wife Madelyne and their two sons Robert and Brian, in prayer and offer their support in a one-hour interfaith prayer service. Many had never met the Misheloffs before.

"It was beautiful," said Mike Misheloff. "It's a shame that it takes such a tragedy to realize what a lot of friends you have."

Madelyne Misheloff, Ilene's mother, her face awash in tears, said only that the ceremony "was very nice."

Meanwhile, police and the FBI said Monday they have no evidence linking the Ilene's disappearance with any other child disappearance in the East Bay — including the attempted kidnap of a girl in Union City over the weekend.

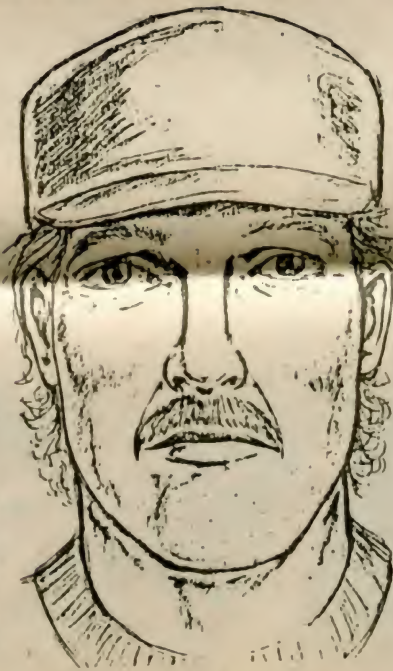
Misheloff vanished a week ago while walking home from Wells Middle School. She was last seen walking west on Amador Valley Boulevard near the Shamrock Village Shopping Center.

Investigators on Monday again retraced her route from school to home and re-searched the creek area Misheloff used as a shortcut to her house on Alegre Drive, Dublin police Sgt. Greg Ahern said.

Volunteers have distributed more than 403,000 fliers bearing Misheloff's photo and description, a volunteer organizer said.

The ceremony Monday was conducted by Rabbi Ira Book of Temple Beth Sholom in San Leandro and Rev. Dick Mateg of St. Raymond.

The Misheloffs, who are Jewish, participated in the ceremony at the Catholic church because many of their friends are members of its congregation.



Suspect in attempted abduction

Police give better sketch of suspect

FEB 7 1989
UNION CITY — Police released an improved sketch Monday of a man wanted for the attempted abduction of a 14-year-old girl from her apartment parking lot Saturday afternoon. A previous sketch, using a less accurate but faster method, was created shortly after the girl fought off her attacker.

The girl described the man as 30 years old, about 6 feet tall, weighing 190-200 pounds, suntanned with curly blond hair and a mustache. She said he had a low voice and wore an Oakland A's sweat suit and a green baseball cap.

School officials in Union City said they're instructing teachers and students in self-defense and urging them to exercise strict safety precautions.

At Alvarado Middle School in Union City, seventh-graders are taught basic self-defense in physical education classes.

"They teach us how to grab the pinky and bend it back, and how to kick," said Carmen Marquez, Alvarado's student body president.

David Pava, principal of Barnard-White Middle School, said his staff is urging students to use common sense.

"Make sure you're with a buddy. And that your parents know where you are," he said.

Kidnapping bill provides for rewards

By Sam Delson
Staff writer

FEB 7 1989
Prompted partly by the abductions of Michaela Garecht and Ilene Misheloff, a legislative panel today will consider a bill authorizing the governor to offer rewards for information that helps police catch kidnappers.

"We're trying to exhaust every possible type of response to these tragedies," said state Sen. Bill Lockyer, D-Hayward. "This bill would strengthen the ability of government to help solve the problem by offering rewards."

Current law gives the governor the power to offer rewards of up to \$10,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of arsonists, terrorist bombers, escaped convicts, people charged with capital offenses, hijackers of public transportation vehicles, or people who assault police officers.

Lockyer's measure, Senate Bill 117, would add kidnapping to that list.

The bill will be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee this afternoon, and Lockyer hopes to amend it to raise the reward limit to \$50,000 or more.

He said the bill grew in part from public response to the kidnapping of 10-year-old Michaela Garecht, who was abducted from outside a Hayward market last Nov. 19, and the case of 13-year-old Ilene Misheloff, who disappeared from her Dublin neighborhood Jan. 30.

"I saw the community response with people helping look for Michaela and hundreds of volunteers leafletting, and I asked my staff to review the law to see if there were any gaps that needed to be addressed," Lockyer said.

An analysis of the bill by Judiciary Committee consultant Patricia Wynne notes that "in the past two months there have been two kidnappings in the author's district" and adds that "the communities have reacted very favorably by getting involved in finding the children."

Wynne concluded, "This bill has been introduced to provide one more tool to get people involved in this process."

Reward funds already have been set up for both Michaela and Ilene.

~~Correction~~ FEB

8 1080

Due to a reporter's error, Tuesday's paper gave a wrong estimate of the number of people attending a prayer service for Ilene Misheloff at St. Raymond's Catholic Church in Dublin. Church officials said the actual number was about 725. In the same article, errors were made with names of two participants. The first name of Rev. Richard P. Matgen was left out and his last name was misspelled. The first name of Rabbi Ira Book also was left out. Rabbi Book is with Temple Beth Sholom of San Leandro.

We regret the errors.



Gordon Clark — staff photo

Sgt. Pat Adams, foreground, was among officers passing out fliers on Ilene's disappearance.

New lead on missing 13-year-old

By Lisa Agrimonti
Staff writer

FEB 17 1989

DUBLIN — Spurred by a phone tip, police on Thursday halted all traffic at Amador Valley Boulevard and San Ramon Road, and passed out fliers with new information about the disappearance of Ilene Misheloff.

The new information is that someone saw Ilene on the median strip at that intersection between 2:50 p.m. and 3:10 p.m. on Jan. 30 — the day she disappeared.

It is some of the most solid information yet received about the disappearance, police said.

During Thursday's effort, six police officers and two FBI agents spent 30 minutes — between 2:45 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. — handing out the fliers and talking to each motorist passing through the intersection.

Police are hoping that at least one of the motorists they stopped may have been traveling that route Jan. 30 and saw the 13-year-old girl or a van that was spotted near there.

According to the tipster who provided the information, the van had been seen at the time of Ilene's

disappearance stopped on San Ramon Road north of Amador Valley Boulevard in the fast lane. Several young people were outside of the van.

Until the tipster called with this lead, the last time Ilene was spotted was on Amador Valley Boulevard near the Shamrock Village Shopping Center.

Besides seeking information about the van, police said they are looking for information about a mid-1980's, light-colored four-door American sedan seen on or near Plata Way in the vicinity of Mepe Park on Jan. 30.

Also Thursday, the television show, "A Current Affair" featured a home video of Ilene skating during a competition in July.

The show's host, Maury Povich, gave the toll-free number for the Dublin police and asked anyone with information on Ilene's disappearance to call.

An Alameda County sheriff's deputy answering the toll-free line said he had received "a couple" of calls as a result of the show. He would not say what information was provided.

The segment also featured two other missing Bay Area girls, Michaela Garecht of Hayward and Amber Swartz-Garcia of Pinole, but most of it was focused on Ilene.

National skating stars to perform at benefit for Ilene

By Lisa Agrimonti
Staff writer

FEB 27 1989

DUBLIN — An ice skating exhibition featuring several national stars, and a basketball charity toss have been slated for March to raise money for the Ilene Misheloff Search Fund.

Skaters Rudi Galindo and Kristi Yamaguchi, who hold the 1989 National Pairs Championship, and Charlie Tickner, former world and national figure skating champion, will appear at 5 p.m. March 5 at Dublin Iceland.

Yamaguchi is also 1989 Junior World Champion and National Senior Ladies Silver Medalist.

"When Ilene was taken, the skating club immediately

started putting this together," said Michael Misheloff, the missing teen's father. "I think that this is absolutely terrific."

Yamaguchi and Galindo will be competing in the world championships the week after the show. "It's a considerable sacrifice on their part," Misheloff said.

"We're just overwhelmed by the generosity of the people."

Sponsored by the Saint Moritz Ice Skating Club, to which Ilene Misheloff belongs, the "Exhibition of Champions" show costs \$10 and tickets can be purchased at Iceland or the Ilene Misheloff volunteer center, 7475 Starward Drive. Only 500 will be admitted.

The charity toss, much like a shoot-a-thon, will be performed by Dublin resident Dave Peterson on March 2. From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., he will shoot free throws non-stop. Dublin High School students will be soliciting pledges.

Michael Misheloff said the fund-raisers are needed to keep the volunteer center in operation, possibly for the long haul.

"I want Ilene found today or tomorrow. I'm still hoping for that, but you have to take into account that this situation can go on for a period of months or years. That's a possibility."

The money will be used to pay the basic operating costs of the center, including utilities.



Mary F. Calvert — staff photo

Skating with heart

Kristi Yamaguchi MAR 6 1989

Fremont figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi smiles as she performs Sunday at a benefit for Ilene Misheloff, a missing Dublin girl. Yamaguchi, junior world ladies champion and national senior ladies silver medalist, was skating at Dublin Iceland.

Sheriffs offer \$10,000 rewards in kidnappings

By Marilee Strong
Staff writer

MAR 17 1989

Ala City

SAN LEANDRO — The Deputy Sheriffs Association of Alameda County announced Thursday it will offer two \$10,000 rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the kidnappers of Michaela Garecht and Ilene Misheloff.

"Someone out there has vital information and we want to encourage that individual to come forward," said association President Robert Vaughn at a news conference at the group's headquarters in San Leandro.

The rewards are the first offered by the organization, which represents several hundred deputy sheriffs in the county.

"I can't tell you how successful they (rewards) are," said Vaughn. "All we care about is that it works once."

The reward money will come from dues, contributions and fund-raising by association members. One \$10,000 reward will be applied to each case, to be disbursed by the lead officer in each investigation.

Michaela was abducted by a stranger outside of a Hayward market Nov. 19. Ilene disappeared Jan.

30. She was last seen walking home from school on Amador Valley Boulevard in Dublin.

The parents of both girls attended the news conference. They said they hope the reward will provide a strong incentive for information on the kidnapper or kidnappers.

"If somebody knew this guy, even six months ago, they can just call in his name," said Sharon Garecht, Michaela's mother. "They don't even have to know where the girls are now. If we find the abductor, we'll find the girls."

Vaughn said he hopes the additional money will encourage those

people who likely know something about the kidnappings to come forward.

"Our experience in law enforcement has been that it is pretty difficult for a person to commit a crime and have no one know about it," said Vaughn.

The sheriffs' rewards will remain separate from other funds already established for search expenses and for information leading to the return of the missing girls. Sharon Garecht said \$178,000 has already been collected in another reward fund for her 10-year-old daughter.

Tom Goff



MAR 19 1989

Walk a mile in this man's shoes

Kidnap
SERGEANT DAVE DiFRANCO is the point man in the search for Ilene Misheloff. He had been up late the night before doing routine police paperwork at home and he looked frazzled when I met him. This was the toughest assignment in his 17 years as a cop.

The 14-year-old vanished on Jan. 30. Three weeks later, the Dublin police chief turned the case over to DiFranco. He was the logical choice. DiFranco is Dublin's juvenile crime officer. He handles as many as 100 missing child cases a year, mostly runaways and parental abductions. Very few are kidnappings by strangers; none have been as hard as the Misheloff case.

No one saw the abduction or the getaway vehicle. If they did, they haven't come forward. Based on reliable sightings, DiFranco and his colleagues have narrowed Misheloff's movements on the afternoon she disappeared down to 350 yards. The trail stops on a concrete traffic island on San Ramon Road near a seafood restaurant. DiFranco believes the kidnapping occurred between the restaurant parking lot and the back fence of a school 350 yards away.

"Three hundred and fifty yards is a pretty small area," DiFranco said. "A girl just can't disappear like this."

WE WERE standing near the shady creek behind the restaurant parking lot. As we talked, a teen-age girl in a denim skirt walked toward us, crossed the creek and headed across a park for an opening in the school fence.

"See," DiFranco said, "she's taking the same route Ilene did. Everybody feels that this can't happen to them."

It was the same time of day that Misheloff disappeared. There were parents and kids in a nearby playground. People were driving down nearby streets. Cars could be seen pulling into the restaurant parking lot. It seemed hard to believe that no one saw what happened to Misheloff. The fact that no one has makes DiFranco's job much tougher.

He has put in long days, at first 16 hours, now no fewer than nine. He went for three weeks without a day off. He is a focused, intense man of 40. I asked him what he did for fun. "Work," he said.

THE DUBLIN Police Department is a small outfit, and DiFranco still has other duties to perform. He works on school drug abuse programs. He was also in charge of

THE DUBLIN Police Department is a small outfit, and DiFranco still has other duties to perform. He works on school drug abuse programs. He was also in charge of traffic control and security for the St. Patrick's Day parade. Misheloff, however, is always on his mind.

"I've had many a sleepless night," DiFranco said. "You carry a case like this with you. I know some investigators who carried cases with them for years."

I asked him if he was prepared for that.

"You know that some night years from now you might be asleep and something is going to come up and you'll have to go for 30 hours straight. Unfortunately someone has to take responsibility for it. What can I say? If it were my kid (he has two teen-age daughters) I'd sure want to know someone is out there worrying about her."

I had asked Misheloff's father, Mike, what he thought of DiFranco.

"He's extremely tenacious," Misheloff said. "Anyone in Dublin should be proud of the police department they have."

THE MISHELOFF command center at department headquarters has become DiFranco's home away from family and home. The case's paperwork alone is formidable. DiFranco and the five other investigators on the case track each document that enters the Misheloff file, even down to who touched it last. They have talked to 550 people and recorded 200 in-depth interviews on paper and in a computer. A stack of witness interviews was sitting on a table.

"You can see it's thicker than the New York phone book," DiFranco said.

On a giant paper pad mounted on an easel, DiFranco keeps a running chronology of tips, contacts and who's working on what phase of the investigation. He was up to page 26.

THE PRESSURE on him seemed great. Time may be running out on finding Misheloff alive. The public knows this and has responded with mass flier mailings, cash donations and a candlelight march. Misheloff's picture is now up on billboards in Oakland, San Francisco and Sacramento.

DiFranco, too, is in the public eye.

"My value as an undercover agent is nil," he joked. "I'd rather do without the notoriety."

The pressure is on, but still DiFranco said, "I don't know if it exceeds the pressure we put on ourselves as bearing the responsibility to solve this thing."

When the leads are exhausted DiFranco will go back over the case looking for something he might have missed. Then, "You start the whole investigation over again. Then you wait for new leads. We've got quite a bit to do yet. What we all hope for is a big break."

I asked him for his gut feeling about that.

"I don't know," he said. "I honestly don't know. I do know we've got a real mystery on our hands. And we're not going to let go."

Time takes its toll on cops seeking missing girls

Paige Dept
By Lisa Agrimonti
Staff writer

Kidnap
MAR 23 1989

2 DUBLIN — When Ilene Misheloff vanished seven weeks ago, every member of the Dublin police department worked every available hour. Days off became unheard of, sleep scarce.

About a dozen FBI agents descended on the small station. Alameda County sheriff's deputies manned a hotline around the clock. And the chief called in the reserves.

But the disappearance that once mobilized an entire community has become another case with few clues. And life at the police station is returning to normal operations.

"We have to also be able to serve the rest of the type of calls and community needs that come in," said Dublin Police Chief Lt. Jim Rose. "It's important that you get a balance there."

The press spokesman, Sgt. Greg Ahern, is back in the night watch sergeant post and only one FBI agent remains on the case. The number of full-time Dublin investigators is down to about five, with others brought in as needed. Dispatchers handle hotline tips at night.

"I would say that about after the third week, it was necessary to reduce the number of hours we were working on the case, not so much because

of overtime, but because there's a burnout factor and I didn't want to burn the troops out," Rose said. "If I got the right lead today and we needed to work around-the-clock, we would."

The second week of the investigation, police officers worked 12 hours on, 12 hours off. The third week, all those assigned to the investigation tallied up 10 hour days. Then things tapered off.

"We just don't have that high, intense volume we had the first two or three weeks," said Rose, who could not provide overtime figures for the 27-member department.

Similarly, the police in Hayward have reduced to the number of people working on the Michaela Garecht kidnapping case.

Ilene's father, Michael Misheloff, said he believes the department is doing all it can and needs to do. "They did everything that they could, that should have been done immediately," he said. "I do know that they're still continuing to search every lead and thoroughly investigate everything."

Despite the TV shows, flier campaigns, fund-raisers, reward funds and billboards, the 14-year-old's disappearance remains a mystery. Police, convinced she didn't run away, have such little concrete information that they can't even

classify the case as a kidnapping.

Sgt. Dave DiFranco, who is heading the investigation, said the department still receives anywhere from a few to more than a dozen calls a day from people offering information.

"This girl did not vanish into thin air," he said. "Somebody, someplace knows what happened. Somebody knows."

The biggest tip was that Ilene was spotted sometime between 2:50 p.m. and 3:10 p.m. Jan. 30 on the median strip at the intersection of Amador Valley Boulevard and San Ramon Road.

Police have their suspicions and theories about how she may have been abducted. None can be proven.

And so the search continues. Posters with Ilene's pictures motivate investigators. A simple sign next to Ilene's picture in the main offices reads: "Patience, persistence, prayer."

Wednesday, DiFranco pointed to a pile of papers, saying he had 10 or 15 leads waiting to be assigned.

"We're going to keep going until we run out of leads and then we're going to take a hard look and see if we missed something," he said. "We're not baffled. We're working on it. We're going to turn up something."

New posters for Kayla, Ilene Misheloff

2 The parents and friends of kidnapped Hayward girl Michaela Garecht will be dispensing posters, bumper stickers and literature about missing children at a booth at Southland Mall in Hayward Friday and Saturday. New fliers of Michaela and missing Dublin teen-ager Ilene Misheloff — including a color poster of Michaela bearing a new picture and enhanced composite of her kidnapper — will be distributed to replace those washed down by recent rains. "That flier is really important because of the different look of Michaela and the color composite of the kidnapper," said Pat Chavez, director of the Missing Children's Project of California. The booth, which will be inside the mall near the entrance to the Food Fair restaurants, will be staffed from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Safety tips and guidance for how parents can protect their children will also be available. San Leandro singer G. Glen Howes will also be on hand with a live performance and a recording of a song he wrote about Michaela and recently recorded at Fantasy Recording Studios in Berkeley.

MAR 23 1989

From staff reports



Mary F. Calvert — staff photo

Seeking Kayla, Ilene

MAR 25 1989

Southland Mall in Hayward became more than a place to find bargains on shoes and swimsuits Friday when the parents of East Bay missing children Michaela Garecht and Ilene Misheloff used the heavily trafficked area to pass out information and pictures of their children. Pat Chavez, left,

of the Missing Child Project helped out Sharon Garecht, holding her son, Robbie, with her daughter Elizabeth. Michaela Garecht, now 10, was abducted by a young man on Nov. 9. Misheloff, pictured in the center, was 13 when she disappeared after leaving school in Dublin on Jan. 30.

Kidnap

Hypnotist assists in kidnap cases

3 By Stacey Hartmann
Staff writer

APR 12 1989

DUBLIN — Hoping to elicit more information from witnesses, police in Hayward and Dublin hired a Berkeley hypnotist to help their investigation of the cases of two missing girls. *Kidnap*

The city of Dublin paid \$200 to Dr. Helmut Relinger, a clinical psychologist and licensed hypnotherapist, for his services in the Ilene Misheloff case, according to city records.

Relinger hypnotized two witnesses in an attempt to get additional clues, said Sgt. Dave DiFranco, Dublin's lead investigator.

"We had a few folks that we thought saw some things and we had hoped they had seen more than what was indicated," DiFranco said. "So we went to him to see if he could help us in bringing out facts they may have seen."

Misheloff, 14, was last seen Jan. 30, walking home from school along Amador Valley Boulevard.

Hayward police also used Relinger to hypnotize witnesses in the case of Michaela Garecht, who was kidnapped outside a market last November. *Kidnap*

"He has an excellent reputation," said Lt. Chuck Breazeale, the head of investigations for Hayward police. "We did get some additional information."

"I would say it might have been beneficial," DiFranco said. "It's not something we're going to hang an entire case on but we use it as one of many tools when the case is indicated."

Relinger said his hypnosis of the witnesses took place in his Berkeley office. Although DiFranco was not there, he said he later reviewed videotapes of the sessions.

"It's nothing like astrology or a useless psychic or anything like that," DiFranco said.

Bill speeds up \$50,000 Kayla reward

By Sam Nelson
Staff writer

APR 13 1989

Acting on the suggestion of the mother of missing child Michaela Garecht, an East Bay legislator Tuesday amended a bill so that it could provide a \$50,000 reward for the capture of Michaela's kidnapper.

Sen. Bill Lockyer, D-Hayward, modified his Senate Bill 117 so that it could take effect as early as this month rather than next year. The bill was then endorsed by the Assembly Public Safety Committee on a 7-0 vote.

The measure would authorize the governor to provide a \$50,000 state reward for the capture of child kidnappers. Lockyer said it was partly inspired by the Nov. 19 abduction of

“... We could not only offer a reward for Michaela's safe return, but also for (her kidnapper's) apprehension.”

— Sharon Garecht

then 9-year-old Michaela from outside a Hayward market and the Jan. 30 disappearance of 13-year-old Ilene Misheloff from her Dublin neighborhood.

When the bill passed the Senate March 2 on a 36-0 vote, Sharon Garecht praised the idea, saying it might prevent future abductions. But she also lamented that it might

come too late to apply to her daughter's case.

Almost \$300,000 had been collected for the missing East Bay girls, but Sharon Garecht noted that the funds applied to search expenses and the safe return of the children but did not cover a reward for information leading to the conviction of the girls' captors.

“If this bill was in effect right now, we could not only offer a reward for Michaela's safe return, but also for (her kidnapper's) apprehension,” Sharon Garecht said.

Lockyer followed up on the suggestion Tuesday by adding an urgency clause to the measure.

The clause means the bill would take effect immediately after the governor signed it, instead of next Jan. 1. It also means the bill must pass by a two-thirds margin in each house of the Legislature instead of just 50 percent.

“I'm trying to respond to Mrs. Garecht's comment that ‘Gee, it's too bad this couldn't apply to our case,’” Lockyer said. “This way it might have some bearing on the local kidnapping cases.”

Faith despite fear



Nick Lammers — staff photo

Mike Misheloff, left, and Rodney Garecht hold out hope their missing daughters will return soon.

APR 19 1989

No East Bay-Novato kidnap link

By Stuart Dedic
Staff writer

Whoever killed 13-year-old Jennifer Moore and dumped her off a road outside Novato probably had nothing to do with abductions of East Bay girls Michaela Garecht, Ilene Misheloff and Amber Swartz-Garcia, police said Tuesday.

There don't seem to be any connections other than there were young females

child safety chart you can cut out for your kids — back of section

involved," said Novato police Sgt. Scott Sibbald. "One of the reasons ours is ruled out is we found our victim.

"Whoever it is that killed our victim didn't take any time or effort in concealing her . . . If the same person killed one of your girls and dumped them they would

have been found by now."

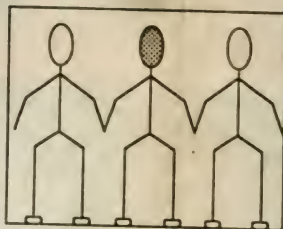
Hayward police Lt. Chuck Breazeale said his office had contacted Novato police by phone and determined it probably wasn't related to Michaela's abduction — mainly because of the way the body was discarded at the side of the road.

The FBI is working on all four cases, but have found nothing to indicate any

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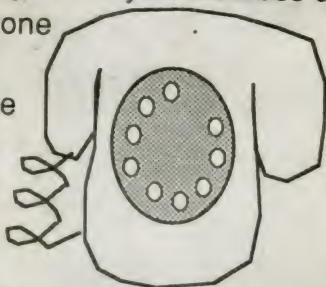
...us, be safe!

Walk home from school with others. Avoid lonely places and never take short-cuts. Let your parents know your route home.

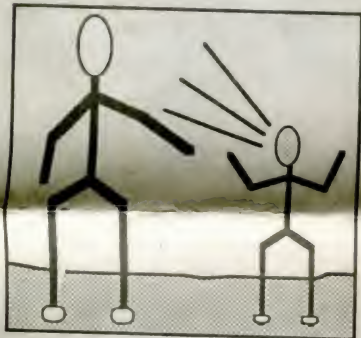


Don't give out your address on the telephone

or tell anyone you're home alone.

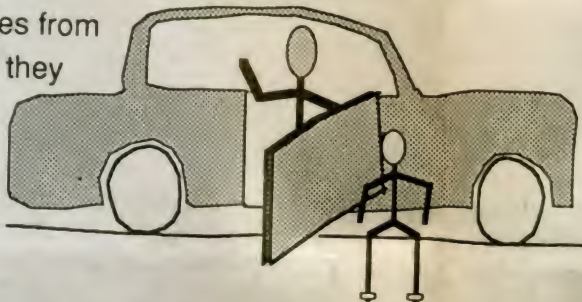


Don't wear clothing with your name embroidered on it.



If someone tries to touch you, scream as loudly as you can, run away and tell your parents immediately.

Never accept rides from strangers, even if they claim to be friends of your family.



Taking some basic precautions can help protect children.

Dik Fishman—staff graphic

Kidnapped

APR 19 1989

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relationship, said FBI spokesman Chuck Latting.

And Novato police had no suspects in Jennifer's death, Sibbald said.

"We got 250-plus calls today," Sibbald said. "Many of those were witnesses who thought they saw suspicious cars or suspicious people near where the body was found."

Police were also having a difficult time Tuesday determining how Jennifer died. They X-rayed her body before an autopsy Tuesday evening, hoping that could reveal any broken bones or other injuries that could have caused her death.

Learning that a young Bay Area girl had been killed was the realization of nightmares, parents of Ilene and Michaela said Tuesday afternoon in a gathering at the Garecht home in Hayward.

"I think it hits us much harder than other people," said Mike Misheloff, whose 13-year-old daughter, Ilene, vanished on her way home from school Jan. 30. "It's like

seeing your worst feelings come true. It's very devastating."

Sharon Garecht, whose 10-year-old daughter, Michaela, was kidnapped outside a Hayward market five months ago today, said she was crushed by the news of Jennifer's death. But she remains certain that her daughter is alive.

"It's like seeing your worst fears realized," said Garecht, who gathered with Misheloff and other supporters to nibble on licorice, sip coffee and support one another Tuesday afternoon. "I still think that couldn't happen to Michaela."

Mike Misheloff also remains confident.

"I still think tomorrow she could come walking up the front doorsteps," he said.

Police in Hayward and Dublin said they are still receiving tips on Michaela and Ilene.

"I don't want to make people paranoid, but this is the first time I remember where we've had a group of these abductions," Latting of the FBI said. "It's probably not unusual. It's probably circumstance."

Friends, family think of Ilene 6 months after disappearance

By Janet Kornblum
Staff writer

Kidnap
AUG 1 1989
DUBLIN — "Every day she's everywhere," said Jamie Coleman about Ilene Misheloff, the girl she would have entered high school with this fall.

Images of Ilene peer from a car window, a bumper sticker or the breast pocket of a friend.

But it's been six months since Coleman or anyone else here saw the real face of the 14-year-old who mysteriously disappeared while walking home one evening.

Still, to Coleman and most of the 200 others who attended a interdenominational service Monday evening marking Ilene's disappearance, six months has not lessened their faith that someday Ilene will return.

"You can never stop hoping and praying," said Coleman.

That was the message from Rabbi Ira Book and the Rev. Basil De Pinto, who led the 45-minute service at St. Raymond's Catholic Church.

"If there's one thing that Jews and Christians share in faith life, it is the idea of remembering," said De Pinto. "So we come together as friends and neighbors to remember and to assure the Misheloff family that we do remember. We do not forget. We keep hope alive."

But after six months, hope does not come easily.

"For these many months we've held one another in faith," Book said. "Ilene, I hope you can hear our prayers, that God will strengthen you. Your family awaits you morning, noon and night."

"So we pray Ilene... that we shall not succumb to despair."

One girl on the swim team with Ilene's older brother Robert choked back tears during the service, occasionally dabbing at the corner of her eye.

But by the time the service ended, the tears flowed in streams as the 17-year-old, who asked not to be identified, repeated what others have often said during the past half-year.

"I don't know, you never think it's going to happen to you. You see it happening in other cities. You never think it's going to happen in this town," she said before walking to the front of the church to hug each of the Misheloffs, who stood in a receiving line.

"The support of the community has been something that invigorates us," said Ilene's father, Michael Misheloff.

It was an evening as much to assure each other as it was to share sadness of a loss, if only temporary.



Carol Padovan — staff photo

Marilyn Fullam helps Mike Misheloff replace posters of his missing daughter, Ilene.

Ilene fliers need to be replaced

By Stacey Hartmann
Staff writer

Kidnap
AUG 17 1989

DUBLIN — Volunteers are needed to help replace tattered fliers posted throughout Dublin 6½ months ago when Ilene Misheloff disappeared.

"We hope to get up 1,000 or more, at least, on the main streets in Dublin and as many of the residential streets as possible," said Ilene's father, Mike Misheloff.

Anyone may stop by the volunteer center to pick up fliers. Tape also will be provided. The center is open

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is located in an office complex at 7475 Starward Drive, Dublin.

Ilene was a 13-year-old student at Wells Intermediate School when she vanished Jan. 30. She was last seen walking home from school, going east on Amador Valley Boulevard at San Ramon Road.

Volunteers immediately came forward to help in the search. They quickly organized in donated office space and began distributing hundreds of fliers with Ilene's photograph.

Many of the fliers were posted in the windows of local businesses and they remain intact, Mike Misheloff said. Those which need replacement are on utility poles and other outside locations, he said.

Volunteers are continuing other efforts to publicize Ilene's disappearance and raise money for the mailing of more fliers across the United States.

A benefit dance is set for 7-11 p.m. Saturday in the Copper Ridge Condominiums in San Ramon.

400 volunteer to mail letters for Kayla, Ilene

By Ross Larsen
Staff writer

FEB 12 1989

HAYWARD — An estimated 400 friends, relatives and strangers came to Centennial Hall Saturday and showed their concern for missing children Michaela Garecht, Ilene Misheloff and Amber Swartz-Garcia.

Henry Ford would have been proud of the makeshift production line that filled four rooms of the hall and cranked out nearly half a million letters containing pictures and descriptions of the missing girls.

The letters will be sent to stores, auto garages, gas stations and other businesses all over the state in the hope that someone will recognize the girls or their abductors when they see them.

Almost three months after 10-year-old Michaela Garecht was snatched from a supermarket park-

ing lot near her house Nov. 19, efforts to bring her back are still in high gear.

"Kayla" Garecht's mother Sharon, nursing a cold and towing a child, overcame her tiredness and spent all day overseeing the massive mailing project.

"Look at all the people who came today," she said. "About 400 people came in and out over the day. The politicians came and they weren't politicking — they were stuffing envelopes."

City Councilwoman Shirley Campbell was seated at one of four tables designated just to seal envelopes and place them in boxes. Dozens of other people were designated single tasks such as folding fliers bearing pictures of the girls and labeling envelopes.

"Look at this arm," Campbell

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Dino Vournas — staff photo

Vanessa Ramos and Meghan Jones fold fliers.

Kidnap

Continued from page 1

said, nursing a tired gluing hand. "It hasn't stopped all day."

Campbell said one of the worst things about the abductions is that children are not as free to go and play and live without fear. She credited the large crowd to people wanting to feel they're doing something to get the children back.

"Face it, all of us would love to be the one to find Michaela or the guy who kidnapped her and end all this," she said. "People still feel that there's a lot of hope."

Even when the boxes of letters were hauled out of the building and chairs were being stacked against the walls, people were still coming up to organizers, almost desperate for something to do.

Unfortunately, fresh fears of kidnapping are also helping to keep the energy high in missing-children and anti-kidnap efforts. Newark and Oakland police are investigating recent kidnap reports involving a 8-year-old boy who fended off an attacker with a karate chop and a 10-year-old Newark girl who ran from a woman who threatened her.

City Councilwoman Shirley

Misheloffs tape segment about Ilene

Edna
Michael and Madelyne Misheloff of Dublin filmed a segment of Channel 30's Bay Talk on Thursday to tell their story and make a plea for their daughter's safe return. The local cable channel filmed the segment to help keep the issue in the public eye. The parents recounted the disappearance of their 13-year-old daughter, Ilene, who vanished on Jan. 30 while walking home on Amador Valley Boulevard from Wells Middle School.

Agencies donate money t

By David Boltano
Staff writer

FEB 9 1989

DUBLIN — Public agencies in Dublin and San Ramon are reaching into their coffers to contribute to the reward fund for missing 13-year-old Ilene Misheloff.

The Dublin San Ramon Services District board of directors has voted to donate a \$10,000 reward for Ilene's return. One councilwoman from San Ramon will propose a similar donation when her council meets next week.

Kidnap
Officials at Dublin City Hall said late Wednesday that a reward donation was under discussion and might be considered on Monday.

The Ilene Misheloff Reward Fund is now at more than \$18,000 in cash and pledges.

The services district also plans to contribute \$1,000 to the Ilene Misheloff Search Fund, to help defray the cost of the search.

The donations will come out of the services district's utilities general fund, said General Manager

Paul Ryan.

The services district voted to establish the reward despite a warning from board attorney Dave Schricker that it could be an illegal use of district money.

Another attorney from the same law firm had said earlier that the reward would not conflict with any laws, said Board President Don Schinnerer.

"It's a real gray area," Schinnerer said. "Attorneys like things in black and white and it's not

to Misheloff reward fund

spelled out that way. Other agencies all over the valley have done this before and I know it's on the agenda for the city of San Ramon."

Meanwhile, San Ramon Councilwoman Diane Schinnerer, who is married to Don Schinnerer, will propose Tuesday that the city of San Ramon donate \$5,000 to \$10,000 to the reward fund, she said.

Misheloff vanished Jan. 30 while walking home along Amador Valley Boulevard. Her disappearance has sparked a widespread but unsuc-

cessful search.

Thousands of fliers bearing her photo and description have been distributed nationwide.

Large posters of Ilene will soon be given to interstate truckers to post on their rigs.

Volunteers Wednesday were preparing more than 200,000 leaflets for distribution to California Highway Patrol offices throughout the state.

Next Wednesday, volunteers will mail out color photographs of Misheloff, along with missing 10-year-old Michaela Garecht of Hayward and Amber Swartz-Garcia of

Pinole.

The photographs will be provided by the FBI and will be mailed to police agencies throughout the nation, said Deanna Williams of the Amber Swartz-Garcia Foundation.

Counselors from The Center will be at Wells Middle School, which Ilene attended, at 7:30 p.m. today to discuss the fears of students.

Reporters from a nationally syndicated show "A Current Affair" have taped an interview with the Misheloffs.

Staff writers Stacey Hartmann and Lisa Bowen contributed to this report.

Classmates taught a hard lesson

By David Boitano
Staff writer

Kidnap
FEB 8 1989

SAN LEANDRO — Ilene Misheloff's classmates have learned a hard lesson in the week since she has vanished: Tragedy can strike close to home.

The dozen teen-agers who meet weekly for a contemporary Jewish issues class at Temple Beth Sholom expressed feelings of fear at Misheloff's disappearance and the fruitless search for her.

"I tell people that I am in her class and they say, 'Gee ... you know her?'" said Adam Book, 15, of San Leandro. "It's the most tragic thing that could happen to your family."

Ilene attended the class with her twin brother, Brian, 13, and was at the class only two weeks ago.

She vanished while walking home along Amador Valley Boulevard Jan. 30 and police still have no idea how or why she disappeared.

The twins recently took part in a b'nai mitzvah, a double Jewish ceremony to celebrate the passage of children into adulthood. Since her disappearance, members of the temple congregation have been at the family's Dublin home daily to offer emotional support.

Brian Misheloff echoed the sentiments of the other students who said the tragedy was all the more difficult to take because it happened to someone in their inner circle.

"I didn't think it would happen to anyone I knew, especially my own sister," he said.

Though the Dublin police have never officially classified the case as a kidnapping, family members have said Ilene would not run away.

Gerald Henig, the California State University, Hayward, professor who teaches the class, said the abduction of Ilene is a "wrong beyond description" that could have a positive ending if the kidnapper cooperates.

"It's a wrong that could be righted, if they will only let Ilene go," he said.

So far, more than 511,000 fliers bearing Misheloff's photo and description have been circulated throughout Northern California and another 265,000 leaflets are in boxes awaiting distribution at the volunteer headquarters on Starward Drive.